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NSC Declassification/Release Instructions on File

THE ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE IN THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL STRUCTURE

There follows a brief description of the NSC system and the Department's role in it. This description is in the main an abbreviated version of a paper on the subject (attached) that is incorporated in a 1975 Department handbook.

The Council is chaired by the President with the Vice President and Secretaries of State and Defense as the other members. The Chairman of the JCS and the DCI regularly attend. The Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs is the chief supervisory officer of the NSC system and staff, and attends meetings as Assistant to the President. State is represented by the Deputy Secretary.

Six Interdepartmental Groups (IGs) at the Assistant Secretary level, chaired by State, draft the basic papers, usually in response to National Security Study Memoranda (NSSMs) which form the basis of NSC consideration of an issue. The work of these IGs is reviewed by four Review Groups, chaired by the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, and manned at the Deputy or Under Secretary level. These are:

--Senior Review Group (SRG). Concerned primarily with policy-oriented issues, the SRG was established by NSDM 85, September 14, 1970. The Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs chairs the group, whose other members are the Deputy Secretaries of State and of Defense; the Chairman of the JCS, and the DCI. The SRG role is to assure that issues are sharply defined, relevant factors considered, and realistic alternatives advanced. The SRG may refer papers reviewed by it to the NSC, to the President, or return them to the originating body for revision.

--Verification Panel (VP). This Panel is the senior group, short of the NSC itself, charged with considering and recommending policy alternatives on disarmament questions. The original Committee, from which the Panel is lineally descended, was established by White House Directive of July 21, 1969. Under the Chairmanship of the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, the Panel plays an active role in the preparation of positions and resolution of policy issues relating to arms control negotiations. The Panel commissions studies, reviews policy issues and discusses guidance to negotiators for SALT, MBFR, and the test ban. Its Working Groups develop the analysis and issues papers. Representation on these Working Groups within State is primarily borne by the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs

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- 2 -

in conjunction with INR, the Policy Planning Staff, and the European Bureau. Backstopping committees chaired by ACDA coordinate the day-to-day instructions to our SALT, MBFR, and test ban delegations.

--Defense Program Review Committee. This Committee, whose State representative is the Deputy Secretary, is not active.

--Intelligence Committee. A separate paper on the Intelligence Committee has been forwarded.

There are in addition two groups which operate within the framework of established policy. These are:

--Washington Special Actions Group (WSAG). An outgrowth of the Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee on Korea, the WSAG was created by White House directive of May 16, 1969 to consider policies and plans during particular crises. It is chaired by the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. Its other members are the Chairman of the JCS, the DCI, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, and the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. Implementation of WSAG decisions are ordinarily conducted through the interagency Crisis Task Forces prescribed by the Under Secretaries Committee.

--Under Secretaries Committee (USC). The USC, a committee at a level higher than the IGs, is chaired by the Deputy Secretary of State; other regular members are the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the JCS and the DCI. The USC is charged with preparing studies, with recommendations or options, for the President, and with monitoring the implementation of certain foreign policy decisions. Responsibility for preparing USC reports is normally assigned to an appropriate Bureau of the Department of State, which in turn establishes an interagency working group. The USC is an arm of the NSC, not the Department of State.

Attachment:
Paper on NSC system.